



HOLST BIRTHPLACE TRUST

**Minutes of the AGM held at 2:30 pm on 18 July 2023
in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham GL50 9SA**

1. Welcome to members and guests

Hilary Simpson (Chair) welcomed everyone to the AGM including:

- 29 voting members;
- 3 honorary (non-voting) members;
- 3 guests.

Those present included Vice-Presidents Steve Wood, Jenny Ogle and Steve Blake.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from 21 members, including patrons Dame Patricia Routledge and Gareth Swain. 8 of these nominated a proxy.

The full list is attached to these minutes.

3. Minutes of the 2022 AGM

There were no points of discussion; the minutes were approved as a true record.

4. Chair's report

The report is attached to these minutes.

Key points:

Introduction:

- The first full year of normal opening since the pandemic has been used to consolidate and enhance the Museum's new identity as Holst Victorian House.

Rebranding:

- Phase 2 of the rebranding project has given visitors an even more authentic experience both of domestic life in a Victorian house and of Holst's own life and music.

Collections:

- The Curator's report covers the Museum's ongoing transformation and the exciting acquisition of the Louise Dyer collection, as well as recent and current exhibitions.

Governance:

- The Trustees are looking for additional Trustees to join the Board – particularly those with skills and experience in fundraising and marketing, as well as a Treasurer.
- Hilary thanked the Collections & Buildings Committee, expertly chaired by Sarah Staniforth, for its valuable contribution to the Museum this year.
- Hilary thanked Mike Jenkinson (who is stepping down as a Trustee) for his successful management of the first phase of the rebranding project and his work in drawing up the Forward Plan.
- The Forward Plan for 2023-26 was agreed in March 2023, and has five strategic aims:
 - To ensure sufficient resources (including human resources) to support the Museum's effective operation and development, and its economic and environmental sustainability.
 - To develop the breadth and diversity of the Museum's audiences locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
 - To digitise the Museum's collections to safeguard their future and ensure accessibility for all.
 - To implement Phase 2 of the 'Unlocking the Victorian House' project.
 - To promote the Museum through a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Gustav Holst's birth (and the 50th anniversary of the Museum's foundation) in 2024.

Staff:

- During the year we said goodbye to Lucy Moriarty, HVH's Operations & Learning Manager.
- Zak Infanti has ably filled the temporary post of full-time Operations Manager for 2023-24.
- Hilary thanked Curator Laura Kinnear for repeatedly going the extra mile during 2022-23 and producing such impressive results with minimal resources.

Volunteers:

- Hilary thanked all the volunteers, especially those who put in a regular commitment (in particular Neville) and those who consistently help at short notice (in particular Anci, who also edits our Journal, which is much appreciated).
- She also commended HVH's work experience student, Roxanne di Giovanni, who recently curated her first exhibition at the Fringe Arts Festival in Bath.

Economic Sustainability:

- The Museum receives no public funding apart from a small grant from Cheltenham Borough Council. Income from admissions covered less than a third of the House's expenditure during 2022-23. Legacies and donations are therefore vital to the Museum's survival.

- Operations this year were supported by two generous legacies.
- Many donations have also been received from individuals and trusts. On behalf of HBT, Hilary expressed sincere thanks to everyone who had helped to sustain the Museum in this way.
- Hilary drew attention to the new website facility which enables supporters to set up a regular donation, and encouraged members to support the Museum via this method. If this attracts sufficient interest, it could make a real difference to the Museum's economic sustainability.

Events:

- The 2022 Birthday Concert at Pittville Pump Room featured the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra and included performances of Holst's "lost manuscripts", *Folk Songs from Somerset* and *Two Songs Without Words*.
- Christmas is becoming an increasingly important part of the Museum calendar. For the second year running a Christmas concert was held with the vocal group Octavo, together with a programme of seasonal events in the Museum itself.
- Hilary noted the popularity of the regular in-house events, tours and activities for both children and adults. She thanked everyone who had been involved in organising this substantial programme.

Looking ahead:

- A summer of celebrations both within the Museum and across Cheltenham is being planned to mark the 150th anniversary of Holst's birth and the 50th anniversary of the setting up of the Museum.
- Hilary thanked everyone for their continued support of Holst Victorian House.

5. Curator's Report

The report is attached to these minutes.

Key Points:

Laura noted the many highlights for the Holst Victorian House in 2022-3 including:

- The exhibition "Hidden in a Drawer: Gustav Holst's Lost Manuscripts" which featured *Folk Songs from Somerset* and *Two Songs Without Words*.
- The acquisition of a very important collection of Holst material: an archive of autograph manuscripts, scores, photographs, letters and other ephemera once belonging to Louise Dyer.
- The implementation in just six weeks of the Phase 2 project: Holst Victorian House Unlocked, including substantial refurbishment, a new room guide and new period lighting.
- The new exhibition – "Making, Mending, Marking" – co-curated with Jo Teague from the University of Gloucestershire which has recently opened.
- Plans for celebrating Holst's 150 birthday and the Museum's 50th anniversary in 2024.

Laura will be submitting the Museum's Arts Council Accreditation return next year. She thanked Zak and the Trustees for their enthusiasm and support.

6. Annual Accounts for 2022-2023

Key Points:

- Income in 2022-23 was higher than in 2021-22, with a significant increase in income from admissions.
- Almost £40,000 was received in legacies during 2022-23, which resulted in an overall surplus and increased reserves.
- Without these legacies, there would have been a deficit of over £22,000 and there remains a 'stubborn' gap between our income and expenditure of about £20,000 a year which is proving difficult to bridge.
- There were no questions, and the accounts were unanimously approved.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts for 2023-2024

- Hilary thanked, in his absence, Gareth Swain who examined the accounts this year and found them satisfactory. Subject to his consent, he will be appointed for the coming year.

8. Election of trustees

- Re-election of retiring Trustees: Martin Renshaw, Hilary Simpson and Sarah Staniforth all stood again for election in line with the requirements of the Trust's constitution and were re-elected unanimously.
- Election of new Trustees: Steve Leary and Lindsay Travis, previously co-opted onto the Board, stood for election and were elected unanimously.
- These five Trustees were elected *en bloc*. Proposed: Mike Jenkinson; seconded: Steve Wood.
- Mike Jenkinson stood down as a Trustee after completing his term of office.

9. Any other business

- Hilary thanked Tom and Fiona Clark for their support of HVH over many years. She wished them a safe journey back home. She noted that they will be living in 'Louise Dyer' territory near Melbourne and will be our two Australian representatives!
- Paul Treble asked about the future of HVH's education programme following the departure of Lucy Moriarty. Hilary confirmed that learning continues to have a central role at the House and children's activities and school sessions still take place throughout the year. The Trustees are committed to maintaining free admission to children, to send out a message about inclusivity and to show their support for Cheltenham Borough Council's "No Child Left Behind" project. Once Accreditation and the 2024 celebrations are completed, it is hoped that the education programme can be further developed. If HVH is successful in securing Arts Council funding for 2024 then additional learning opportunities including workshops will be available to the public with the necessary funds to pay for a coordinator. The Trustees will keep the situation under review.
- Liz Auster asked whether links between HVH and All Saints Church could be re-established in time for the celebrations in 2024. Laura confirmed that planning is underway for joint

concerts in both venues. John Wright stated that once the Church's facilities were upgraded there would be more potential for piano and organ recitals.

The meeting was followed by a talk by Professor Jackie Labbe entitled *Wisdom in the Inside: Juliana Horatia Ewing's Moral Guidance in her Children's Literature of the 1870s and 1880s*.

John Beard
Hon Secretary, Holst Birthplace Trust

Signed.....

Date.....

PRESENT

Quorum: ten members present in person or by proxy and entitled to vote upon the business to be conducted at the meeting OR one twentieth of the total membership at the time, whichever is the greater.

Total membership as at 17 July 2023 = 237; total voting members present (including proxies) = 37.

	First Name	Surname	Voting member	Voting members present	Others present	Notes
1	Sue	Adlard	Yes	1		
2	Julie	Arnold	Yes	1		
3	Liz	Auster	Yes	1		Volunteer
4	Andrew	Auster	No		1	
5	Elizabeth	Barker	Yes	1		Volunteer
6	Steve	Blake	Yes	1		Vice President
7	Fiona	Clarke	Yes	1		
8	Tom	Clarke	Yes	1		
9	Geoffrey	Cox	Yes	1		
10	John	Drywood	Yes	1		
11	Val	Fairbairn	Yes	1		Volunteer
12	Alison	Hall	Yes	1		Volunteer
13	Zak	Infanti	No		1	Operations Manager
14	Mandy	Jenkinson	Yes	1		Volunteer
15	Mike	Jenkinson	Yes	1		Trustee
16	Laura	Kinnear	No		1	Curator
17	Steve	Leary	Yes	1		Trustee
18	Penny	Liddiard	Yes	1		Volunteer
19	Alison	Noble	Yes	1		Volunteer
20	Jenny	Ogle	Yes	1		Vice President
21	Sabine	Orton	Yes	1		Volunteer
22	Caroline	Priest	Yes	1		
23	Gwyneth	Rattle	Yes	1		
24	Martin	Renshaw	Yes	1		Trustee
25	Cecil	Sanderson	Yes	1		
26	Hilary	Simpson	Yes	1		Chair
27	Sarah	Staniforth	Yes	1		Trustee
28	Moyra	Stephens	Yes	1		
29	Lindsay	Travis	Yes	1		Trustee
30	Paul	Treble	Yes	1		Volunteer
31	Lesley	Ward	Yes	1		
32	Steve	Wood	Yes	1		Vice President
33	John	Wright	No		1	Trustee
			Total	29	4	
PROXIES						
1	Angela	Applegate	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair
2	Alison	Ayres	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair
3	Frank	Bayford	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair
4	John	Beard	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair
5	Gill	Colver	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair

6	A M	Cutbush	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair
7	John	Paulson	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair
8	Patricia	Routledge	Yes	1		Proxy vote to chair
			Total	8		
Guests						
1	Jenni	Orme			1	Museum Development Officer (Glos), SW Museum Development
2	Jackie	Labbe			1	Speaker
APOLOGIES						
1	Angela	Applegate			1	Proxy vote to chair
2	Alison	Ayres			1	Proxy vote to chair
3	Frank	Bayford			1	Proxy vote to chair
4	Peter	Bull			1	
5	John	Beard			1	Hon Sec, proxy vote to Chair
6	Louisa	Coley			1	Treasurer
7	Gill	Colver			1	Proxy vote to chair
8	A M	Cutbush			1	Proxy vote to chair
9	David	Elder			1	
10	Judie	Hodsdon			1	
11	Catherine	Martin			1	Volunteer
12	Heather	Moore-Scott			1	
13	John	Paulson			1	Proxy vote to chair
14	Patricia	Routledge			1	Proxy vote to chair
15	Amanda	Rowlands			1	
16	John	Rowlands			1	
17	Anci	Seymenliyska			1	Volunteer
18	Velia	Stevens			1	Volunteer
19	Gareth	Swain			1	Patron
20	Philippa	Tudor			1	
21	Sue	Warr			1	



HOLST BIRTHPLACE TRUST AGM, 18 JULY 2023

CHAIR'S REPORT

*“To share the stories of the Holst Victorian House,
a period home where composer Gustav Holst was born”*

Our mission

Introduction

2022-23 was our first full year of normal opening since the pandemic, and we have used it to consolidate and enhance our new identity as Holst Victorian House.

Rebranding

Phase 2 of our rebranding project has given our visitors an even more authentic experience both of domestic life in a Victorian house and of Holst's own life and music. The aim throughout has been to attract and retain a larger and more diverse audience and thereby ensure the Museum's long-term sustainability.

Collections

The Curator's report (below) covers the Museum's ongoing transformation and the exciting acquisition of the Louise Dyer collection, as well as our recent and current exhibitions.

Governance

The Museum is governed by a Board of Trustees who are also Directors of the Limited Company. After the AGM there will be seven Trustees out of a possible maximum of twelve and we are looking for additional Trustees to join the Board – particularly those with skills and experience in fundraising and marketing, as well as a Treasurer. If you know anyone who might be interested, please ask them to contact us.

As Trustees we meet formally every six weeks, but most of us are involved in the work of the Museum in one way or another on an almost daily basis, and I'd like to thank the Trustee team for the immense amount of time and effort that they all contribute to the Museum.

We currently have one formal sub-committee, which is responsible for the Museum's collections and the building and is expertly chaired by Sarah Staniforth. I'd like to thank Sarah and the other members of this committee - Steve Blake, Penny Liddiard, Alison Hall, and our curator Laura Kinnear - for their valuable contribution to the Museum and for all their hard work and support.

Two new trustees joined us during the year – Lindsay Travis and Steve Leary. They have both brought a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to their roles and are now standing for formal election to the Board.

Sadly we are saying goodbye to Mike Jenkinson who is stepping down as a Trustee after three years during which he successfully managed the first phase of our rebranding project and was instrumental in drawing up our Forward Plan. Mike was a Volunteer for many years before becoming a Trustee and will be continuing as one of our front of house regulars.

Our Forward Plan for 2023-26 was agreed in March, and has five strategic aims:

1. To ensure sufficient resources (including human resources) to support the Museum's effective operation and development, and its economic and environmental sustainability.
2. To develop the breadth and diversity of the Museum's audiences locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
3. To digitise the Museum's collections to safeguard their future and ensure accessibility for all.
4. To implement Phase 2 of the 'Unlocking the Victorian House' project.
5. To promote the Museum through a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Gustav Holst's birth (and the 50th anniversary of the Museum's foundation) in 2024.

As Trustees we are particularly involved in the first of these aims, that is trying to ensure sufficient resources to support the Museum's effective operation and development, and its economic and environmental sustainability. This continues to be a challenging aim.

Staff

During the year we said goodbye to Lucy Moriarty, our Operations & Learning Manager, who took up a full-time post as Community Action Manager at the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Through the use of reserves and legacies we were able to create a much-needed (but unfortunately temporary) post of full-time Operations Manager for 2023-24; this has been ably filled by Zak Infanti, who started working for us under the government's Kickstart scheme, and I'd like to express our thanks to him. However, on our current financial projections we are unlikely to be able to retain this as a full-time post in future years unless we can substantially increase our income.

The unique atmosphere of the house which visitors encounter (and which so many comment on) is the result of much hard work (often behind the scenes) by our Curator Laura Kinnear, and I would like to thank her for repeatedly going the extra mile once again during 2022-23 and producing such impressive results with minimal resources.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the life-blood of the Museum; we rely on them not just to keep the Museum open and to welcome visitors, but in a range of roles behind the scenes. In common with virtually all other organisations that are staffed by volunteers, we are currently finding it difficult to recruit sufficient numbers and there have been occasions recently when we have had to close without notice because no volunteers were available.

I'd therefore like to thank all our volunteers, particularly those who put in a regular commitment (the star performer in this respect is Neville, who regularly undertakes three sessions a week) and also those who consistently help us out at short notice (especially Anci). Anci also edits our Journal, which is much appreciated.

We continue to offer work experience placements to both school and university students and are very proud of our work experience student Roxanne di Giovanni who recently curated her first exhibition at the Fringe Arts Festival in Bath.

Economic sustainability

We are an independent charity, and receive no public funding apart from a small grant from Cheltenham Borough Council. Our income from admissions covered less than a third of our expenditure during 2022-23, so legacies and donations are vital to the Museum's survival.

Our operations this year were supported by two generous legacies: one of £10,000 from Bill Parker, whom many of you may remember as a long-time supporter of the Museum and a former Trustee, and one of almost £30,000 from Malcolm Thatcher, about whom we know very little. Malcolm, who was a librarian, didn't live locally and was not one of our members, but he was a church organist in his home town of Harpenden and we can only assume that his private visit or visits to the Museum left a lasting impression and inspired him to leave us a generous percentage of his estate.

We have also received many donations from individuals and trusts, too many to list individually. I want to express our sincere thanks to everyone who has helped to sustain the Museum in this way.

Regular donations to support day-to-day operational costs are the Holy Grail of income generation for charities, and we have recently introduced a facility on our website for our supporters to set up a regular donation. If this attracts sufficient support it could make a real difference to our economic sustainability.

Events

The 2022 Birthday Concert at Pittville Pump Room featured the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra and included performances of Holst's "lost manuscripts", *Folk Songs from Somerset* and *Two Songs Without Words*, which were found in a drawer in New Zealand in 2017 and were donated to the Museum in 2018. It was particularly magical to hear *Folk Songs from Somerset* being performed in the UK for the first time since 1906.

Holst of course composed the best-known setting of one of our most well-loved Christmas carols, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, and as a Victorian house our audiences rightly expect to see a range of Christmas events. Christmas is therefore becoming an increasingly important part of our calendar. For the second year running we held a Christmas concert with the vocal group Octavo, together with a programme of seasonal events in the Museum itself.

Throughout the year we continued to run our popular in-house events including talks, recitals, our Victorian Book Group, our knitting group, Bake Back in Time, and craft and entertainment sessions for children and adults. In addition we continue to provide sessions for schools, and an increasing number of group visits and tours. A series of events was also held to raise money for our Phase 2 project. This constitutes a substantial events programme for a small museum and I'd like to thank everyone who has been involved in organising these events.

Looking ahead

2024 will be a milestone year for us, marking not only the 150th anniversary of Holst's birth but also the 50th anniversary of the setting up of the Museum. A summer of celebrations both within the Museum and across Cheltenham is being planned.

We are grateful for your continuing support as Friends of the Museum and we look forward to you joining us for some very special anniversary events in 2024.

Hilary Simpson
Chair of Trustees



HOLST BIRTHPLACE TRUST AGM, 18 JULY 2023

CURATOR'S REPORT

There have been many highlights for the Holst Victorian House in 2022-3, and it has been a particularly successful year for collections and interpretation.

Summer 2022 saw the opening of a new exhibition, *Hidden in a Drawer: Gustav Holst's Lost Manuscripts*, which featured *Folk Songs from Somerset* and *Two Songs Without Words*, two Holst autograph manuscripts which were found in the office of the Bay of Plenty Symphonia, Tauranga, New Zealand in 2017. Following their discovery, they were generously donated to the Museum in 2018. In addition to the exhibition, the pieces were performed by the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra on the 17th of September at Pittville Pump Room – the first time *Folk Songs from Somerset* had been heard in the UK since 1906!

While the *Hidden in a Drawer* exhibition was being organised, the Museum was also securing the acquisition of a very important collection of Holst material: an archive of autograph manuscripts, scores, photographs, letters and other ephemera once belonging to Louise Dyer (1884-1962). Australian-born Dyer moved to France in the 1920s and became a fashionable and influential patron of the arts. She met Holst in 1924 and it was a friendship of some significance. The support of Mrs Dyer was clearly of great personal importance to the composer and lasted until the end of his life. He responded by sending a cascade of signed scores, photographs, books, and autographs to her. Funding for this significant acquisition was obtained from the V&A/Arts Council Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the National Libraries and the L.G. Harris Trust. However, substantial donations were also made by Friends and supporters of the Museum, for which we are extremely grateful. The Louise Dyer material will be a central element of the 150th Holst anniversary celebrations in 2024 next year, so please look out for further information in the coming months.

Collections, of course, are the springboard for stories, engaging visitors in the narrative of a museum or period house such as ours. During 2022-3 we focused on how we could enhance the visitor experience by using carefully chosen objects to create atmosphere and deepen the period authenticity of the house as part of our Phase 2 project: Holst Victorian House Unlocked. This was the second phase of the refurbishment project which began in 2021 when the Museum was rebranded as the Holst Victorian House and stories of other residents – not just Holst – were featured in short films and a brand-new Room Guide.

Phase 2 was planned during lockdown but actually implemented in just six weeks, beginning in March 2023. The hall and former exhibition room were refurbished to allow for an improved visitor welcome and shop space, and the Drawing Room went from pared-back Regency to full-on Victoriana complete with tassels and tapestry cushions – and an 1870s piano of the type Adolph von Holst might have once played at 4 Pittville Terrace.

A major improvement was the installation of Victorian gas and oil lighting, sensitively converted to electricity, which adds an extra dimension to the Holst Victorian House – you truly feel like you are stepping back in time when you enter the Museum. We owe particular thanks to Fritz Fryer Lighting for their help with this. There are still a few tweaks to be made, but overall the project has been a huge success and we have had a wealth of positive comments in person and online. If you haven't visited since we've made these improvements, I very much encourage you to do so. As an added incentive, we also have a new exhibition - *Making, Mending, Marking* - about the needlework of the Cheltenham Female Orphan Asylum displayed in several rooms in the house, which has been co-curated with Jo Teague from the University of Gloucestershire.

Things don't look like they will be slowing down as we head into 2024: plans are already underway for celebrating Holst's 150th birthday and the Museum's 50th anniversary. We will also be submitting our Arts Council Accreditation return this time next year.

In all of these endeavours, I have been supported by Zak Infanti, our energetic Operations Manager, and of course, a fantastic Board of Trustees who have been so enthusiastic about Holst Victorian House Unlocked and its potential for the future of the Museum. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all, and I look forward to working with them on 2024's exciting anniversaries.

Laura Kinnear
Curator